

DRAFT LOCAL KNOWLEDGE & TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE DEFINITION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Alaska Board of Fisheries recognizes local knowledge and traditional knowledge as an important aspect of best available science. As such, access to these knowledge systems should be an important part of informing Board decisions through their close proximity and intimate, often long-standing, relationships with fish resources, the environment, and the ecological systems that are critical to fishery sustainability. These relationships may exceed direct references to the natural world to include values associated with an entire world view, such as reciprocity, respect, and relationality.

In September of 2023, a protocol was published providing guidance for identifying, analyzing, and incorporating Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence information into the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's decision-making process. This protocol was the result of a collaborative-multi-year effort from the Council's Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Taskforce. An important component of this protocol is the definitions presented in the document. It is the Board's opinion that these collaborative efforts produced well-informed definitions of local knowledge and traditional knowledge, the basis of which should be used by the Board in its effort to solicit best available science (see Protocol for Identifying, Analyzing, and Incorporating Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Information into the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Decision-making Process, North Pacific (LKTKS Protocol), North Pacific Fishery Management Council, September 2023 (<https://meetings.npfmc.org/CommentReview/DownloadFile?p=01b5068d-0440-46af-ab1e-50b899ae2faf.pdf&fileName=LKTKS%20Protocol.pdf>)).

Local Knowledge (LK)

LK develops from the observations and experiences of people living, working, harvesting, and processing in specific places (Close & Hall 2006; Martin et al., 2007; Neis & Felt 2000; PFRCC 2011), and LK holders may or may not be Indigenous Peoples. LK can evolve over time, but it is inherently the product of knowledge based on personal and/or shared experience. LK holders can be local people residing in communities with place- and community-specific insights to share. One important distinction of LK from TK is that one does not necessarily need years of experience to hold LK about an ecosystem, fishery, or species of fish. The term 'LK holder' is used in reference to any, and all, people that hold information relevant to a particular fishery (e.g., residents, fishermen, etc.), while 'LK expert' is more specific and acknowledges that an individual may hold above-average knowledge about a topic that is deep in breadth and scope. An 'LK expert' may also be recognized by their peers as such.

The Board's decision-making currently incorporates local knowledge holders and experts primarily through ADF&G's local advisory committees, oral and written public comments, and the Board's committee processes.

Traditional Knowledge (TK)

We use TK to reference knowledge, or a way of knowing, that is unique to a given culture or society, and, often through language, encompasses a worldview that defines specific relationships between humans and nonhuman attributes of the world. As knowledge that derives from both personal and the cumulative experiences of one's forbearers, it is grounded in generational knowledge but also subject to change and refinement. It is characterized by a long time scale. It is usually local in scale and often provides a counterpoint to more broad-based scientifically produced knowledge.

Per the LKTKS Protocol, we use the term ‘Traditional Knowledge’ rather than other terms like ‘Traditional Ecological Knowledge’ or ‘Traditional Environmental Knowledge’ because the knowledge that is relevant to fisheries management goes beyond the ‘ecological’ or ‘environmental’ components of the knowledge system. Knowledge about human-animal and human-environment relationships, as well as values associated with the marine ecosystem (e.g., Raymond-Yakoubian and Daniel 2018), and other aspects of how to live in and with the natural world are all a part of TK and are relevant to the Board’s decision-making process.

The Board endeavors to incorporate traditional knowledge more intentionally into its process by seeking and inviting traditional knowledge holders, recognized by their community, tribe, or other organizations to share their experiences, values, alternative and/or independent observations and data collections directly with the Board.

For the purposes of this meeting, this invitation will be made through a new agenda item. The Board will provide the opportunity to sign-up to provide traditional knowledge relevant to the proposals and subject matter under consideration at this meeting. The time allowance will be ten minutes.

This is intended to be a trial or “pilot” approach to incorporating this specific information into the Board process. The Board, through its Process Committee, will solicit feedback on this approach and suggestions for how it might be improved for future regulatory Board meetings.

The Board would like to recognize the efforts and work of the LKTKS Taskforce and all those who contributed to inform the protocol.